

A GARDEN OF
MAWSON'S MAKING
OF ITS TIME, TIMELESS

**Kitchen Garden Online Activity:
Sustainability in a historic
Lake District garden**



Sustainability in a historic Lake District garden

About this resource

This resource has been produced to help you explore the Brockhole Kitchen Garden with your learners. The resource focusses on the concept of sustainability. Through exploring the garden's history and modern-day use, your learners will find out how sustainable gardening principles have been applied and used. You will see how its designer, landscape architect Thomas Mawson, planned and built this Kitchen Garden on the shore of Windermere as part of a villa for the family of a Manchester silk merchant at the start of the 20th century.



1946 (c) Liverpool Archives.

In this resource you will find information about:

- The history of Brockhole – who it was built by and why
- Thomas Mawson – landscape architect and Brockhole garden designer
- Garden features – how they combine with each other, and with the house, to make up a whole
- The key moments in Brockhole's garden development

Activity themes and curriculum links

Sustainability is all about managing resources so that they can be maintained indefinitely. Sustainable garden practice comes about through understanding our relationship to the earth's resources, learning how to use those resources wisely and putting all of this into practice in an environmentally conscious way.

The history of Brockhole's Kitchen Garden helps us to see that it was progressive in its development – sustainable design for the future.

This learning resource is intended to provide opportunities for cross-curricular learning. The information and activities use history as a starting point for exploring History, English, Geography and Art.

Learning Activities

The information and activities within this resource are intended to introduce you and your learners to Brockhole.

Other activities are available through the Brockhole Learning Team. The onsite activities explore sustainable gardening in depth and include:

- A history of sustainability in Brockhole's garden – a staff-led guided trail (45 minutes)
- Design planning for a sustainable Kitchen Garden – a staff-led activity (45 minutes)
- Growing for sustainability in the Kitchen Garden – a staff-led activity (45 minutes)

Background to the Kitchen Garden project

Located between Windermere and Ambleside, Brockhole consists of a formal house and gardens originally developed in 1898 as a family residence. These are protected as a Grade 2-Registered Park and Garden because of their architectural and historical significance.

Purchased by the Lake District National Park Authority (LDNPA) in 1968, the site now attracts around 300,000 visitors each year.

In April 2018 thanks to a successful application, the Lake District National Park Authority was awarded a generous grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to restore Brockhole's Kitchen Garden and increase accessibility. Staff and volunteers worked hard to research and restore the Kitchen Garden. Restoration work was completed in March 2019 volunteers have continued to support, develop and deliver community engagement and learning activities.

This learning resource and the activities within were produced by Brockhole Kitchen Garden Project staff and volunteers, with support from the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Background history

Brockhole's designed garden, including the Kitchen Garden, is one of landscape designer Thomas Mawson's early projects. It reflects many of the approaches that he adopted and pursued throughout his career. As one of a few commissions undertaken during a brief working partnership with architect Dan Gibson, who designed the house, this collaborative venture is historically important. The house and gardens are also historically important because of what we know of their inhabitants and their relationship with the house and other people at the time.

The Gaddum family

William Henry Adolphus Gaddum, Esquire, was a Manchester man with a passion for Lakeland. William was a textile merchant, and his family had commercial links with Milan and Bombay. Family and business connections to Europe and beyond were often key to a family's commercial success, and merchants like the Gaddums from continental Europe and beyond had made their homes in Manchester since the late 18th century.

The Windermere area was attractive to wealthier residents of the North of England. This attractiveness increased following the opening of the Kendal to Windermere Railway in 1847. Many rich city dwellers bought second homes in Westmorland. The number of second homes doubled between 1850 and 1910, with most new owners permanently residing in the 'Industrial and Commercial North' of England.

In 1896, William Gaddum purchased a group of fields at Brockhole, then still farmland and woodland. Birkett Wood, a well and a boathouse with a landing stage were already here, and numerous old quarries. The following year, 1897, the Gaddum family commissioned landscape gardener Thomas Mawson and architect Dan Gibson to build a 'summer house' on his newly-purchased land in the newly-fashionable Lake District. William was a keen photographer, and so there is an unusually good record of the site before the work started, as well as during and after.

In 1899-1900 William Gaddum, his wife Edith (nee Potter), and their two children, Walter Frederick and Elizabeth Marjorie moved into the house. While Edith Gaddum moved to Brockhole on a permanent basis from around 1900, William continued to live and work in Manchester. He only made a permanent move to Brockhole in 1917 when his company was wound up after the deaths of his uncle, father and younger brother at the beginning of the 1900s, and the economic effects of World War I. William could now indulge properly his lifelong interest in sailing.

Thomas Mawson

Thomas Mawson was born in 1861 in Scorton near Lancaster. The family moved to Lancaster, where his uncles were builders. In Lancaster the 7-year old Thomas got his first taste for gardening in a semi-detached house built by his father.

Thomas had been a delicate child, and as a cure he was encouraged to work in the open air. Bought a small spade by his father, he was taught how to dig a straight line. Turning over the soil thrilled the young Thomas. From digging he progressed to planting and sowing, under the direction of his parents.

Aged 14, Thomas began to help his father on his new nursery project and fruit farm near Bentham. Thomas worked hard, and also spent his evenings and free time studying garden books and botany. Thomas began to hope for a career, and "accidentally turned my thoughts and studies towards Landscape Gardening."

When Thomas' father died, his mother arranged for her sons to move to London, where they instantly found work in commercial horticulture. Thomas came into contact either in person or by correspondence - with many of the most well-known gardeners and designers of the day.

In London, Thomas was introduced to the ideas of influential thinker John Ruskin, and the Arts and Crafts Movement he inspired. When Thomas moved to Windermere in 1884 to start a new nursery business, Lakeland Nurseries, with his family, he found a playground for his new skills and ideas. The English Lake District, an attractive destination for wealthy patrons, provided Thomas Mawson with an excellent opportunity to develop his practice.

Thomas Mawson and Dan Gibson

Mawson met architect Dan Gibson while working at Graythwaite on Lake Windermere. The pair became firm friends, keeping in close contact and working together up until Gibson's early death in 1907.

Their formal working partnership lasted only two years - 1898-1899. During this time, they worked on some of their most successful houses and gardens, including Brockhole and Graythwaite, and they enjoyed a close and sympathetic working relationship. Mawson would have recognised that Gibson was an architect with whom he could work very well.

Brockhole after the Gaddums

William Gaddum's wife Edith died in 1937. William Gaddum remarried the following year, 1938, to Agnes Vey, a widowed neighbour. After William died in 1945, aged 89, his family sold the house. The furniture was auctioned off, and much of the Arts and Crafts interiors was removed.

The value of Lake Windermere to the nation's health was clearly appreciated by the British medical establishment. Hospitals and orphanages cropped up along its shores, and Merseyside Hospitals Council acquired the property at Brockhole, opening it as a convalescent home in 1946.

In 1966 Brockhole was purchased by the Lake District National Park Authority, with a grant from the National Parks Commission. In 1969 Brockhole opened as the first National Park Visitor Centre, welcoming 40,000 visitors in its first month. LDNPA have operated the site as its visitor centre since then.

Online resources

The following activities are designed to provide a short introduction to Brockhole garden and Kitchen Garden. They can be done in the classroom before or following a visit to Brockhole.



ACTIVITY 1 World Heritage Site activity

Curriculum link – History, English and Geography The English Lake District World Heritage Site

World Heritage Sites are cultural and natural sites of ‘outstanding universal value’. They are designated by UNESCO under the World Heritage Convention 1972 on the recommendation of national governments.

The case for Outstanding Universal Value for the English Lake District is based on a combination of attributes falling under three themes:

1. A landscape of exceptional beauty, shaped by persistent and distinctive agro- pastoral traditions which give it special character.
2. A landscape which has inspired artistic and literary movements and generated ideas about landscapes that have had global influence and left their physical mark.
3. A landscape which has been the catalyst for key developments in the national and international protection of landscapes.

Windermere, with its spectacular Picturesque views at the head of the lake, framed against a backdrop of high mountains, and its relatively easy access by coach from the south, was one of the principal attractions in the English Lake District for early visitors in the 18th century. The lakeside town of Bowness developed to provide facilities for this and the adjacent town of Windermere developed directly as a result of the arrival of the railway in 1847.

The early development of villas and designed landscapes around the lake and on its islands has produced one of the most important Picturesque landscapes in Europe.

Key buildings include the cylindrical house on Belle Isle, Storrs Hall and the Station at Claife, constructed on one of the viewing stations identified by Thomas West. The western shore of Windermere, around Claife, was the location of some of the earliest Picturesque tree planting in the Lake District.

The tradition of villa construction continued into the early 20th century with the building of a small group of houses, including Brockhole, which are considered to be some of the best examples of the Arts and Crafts style.

What is Arts and Crafts?

The Arts and Crafts movement was a trend in the decorative and fine arts that developed in reaction to the poor working conditions of the people creating and producing decorative and fine arts.

British people in the late 19th century had seen a century of mechanised and mass production. Reacting to factory production, industrialisation and to the low status that artists and craftspeople, especially working in decorative arts, found themselves, people began to change how they valued the way things were made. The Arts and Crafts movement reformed how almost everything was designed and made. It came from the realisation that society needed to prioritise the quality of products, to make their manufacture less dehumanising, and to raise status of crafts such as ceramics, textiles, metalwork and furniture.

One of the inspirations behind the Arts and Crafts movement was writer and one-time Cumbria resident, John Ruskin.

TASK

Write a paragraph that helps people to appreciate and understand why Brockhole and its gardens is an important feature of the English Lakes World Heritage Site.



ACTIVITY 2 Convalescent home in 1950s

Curriculum link - History and English

Brockhole was used as a convalescent home in the 1950s. It was owned and run by the Merseyside Hospitals Council. The Council's 1946 Annual Report stated that the house with 30 acres of lovely grounds along the shore of Lake Windermere was acquired and opened as a house to accommodate 45 women patients from urban Merseyside. In 1962, 482 women passed through Brockhole whilst convalescing from surgery and other medical conditions. The maximum stay was about three weeks. Convalescent home residents could obtain a postcard to send home to relatives showing where they were staying.

Many large houses would have a garden capable of feeding the family and staff. During the Second World War, when the government encouraged people to grow their own food to support rationing and the war effort, the Gaddum family expanded the Kitchen Garden. When the Merseyside Hospitals Council bought the site from the Gaddums it must have inherited a substantial Kitchen Garden that would have provided food and activities for its patients.



A Brockhole postcard © Liverpool Archives.
Convalescent Home

TASK

It's the 1950s. Imagine you are staying at Brockhole recovering from an operation. Write a postcard to your family back in Liverpool telling people about your stay, how it is different from your home in the city and the value of its gardens.



Activity 3 A sustainability investigation

Curriculum link – History

As a landscape architect it was Thomas Mawson's job to design Brockhole's outdoor environment to work in harmony with its buildings. The location of the Kitchen Garden has not changed since it was first designed by Mawson, as part of Brockhole's wider garden plan, but it has changed in shape and size.



Brockhole house and gardens with the Kitchen Garden in the foreground, first established in 1899
© Lake District National Park Authority.



Brockhole house and gardens in 1946. The Kitchen Garden in the foreground had been enlarged below the original Mawson terraces, perhaps in response to World War II rationing
© Liverpool Archives.



Brockhole Kitchen Garden today. The size of the Kitchen Garden has been greatly reduced
© Lake District National Park Authority.

TASK

Use three images of the site — 1899, 1946 and today — can you describe the differences and similarities. What does this tell you about the way it was used at different times?
What is different, what is the same?

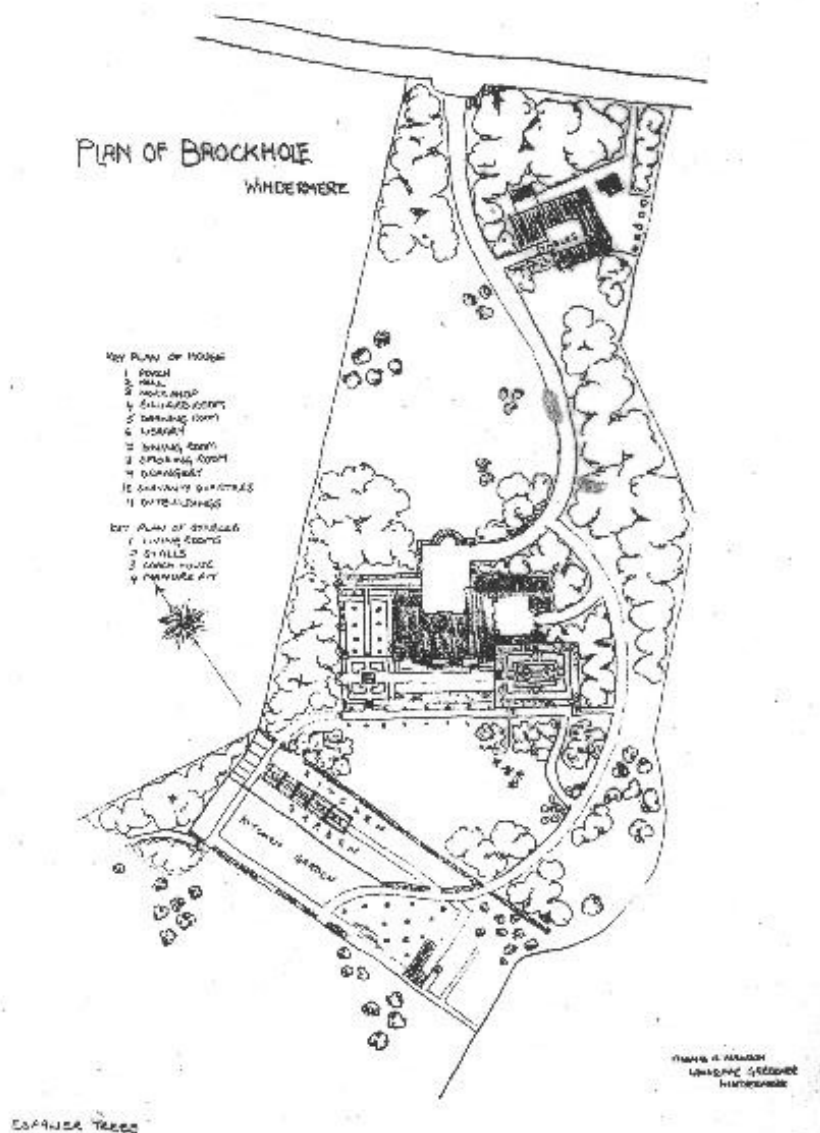


ACTIVITY 4 Thomas Mawson – an ‘artist’ in the garden

Curriculum link – History and Art and Design

Thomas Mawson was a landscape architect. When he was appointed by William Gaddum to design Brockhole’s gardens, it was his job to make sure that his plans would work in harmony with those of the buildings and roads. Mawson, as garden designer, and Dan Gibson, as house architect, shared enthusiasm for the unique qualities of local style buildings, craftsmanship and materials, and how the gardens, as part of the whole package, were part of this. Mawson tried to link the garden with the house, but also to link the house and garden with the Lake District surroundings.

Mawson was strongly associated with the development of Arts and Crafts ideology in the Lake District. His book, first published 1900, was called ‘The Art and Craft of Garden Making’.



Ref: Kendal Archives WDB86 PAINTED LITERATURE
File containing landscape + architectural photographs,
drawings + garden layout designs - no date.

Thomas Mawson’s original sketch design plan of Brockhole’s garden © Kendal Archive Centre.



Bird's eye view of Brockhole's garden today © LDNPA

TASK

Look at Mawson's design plan of Brockhole's garden. This represents his vision for the gardens at Brockhole. Now think about an outdoor space that you know. This could be your own garden, your school garden, your local park or other outdoor space. If you were to develop a new plan for this space what would it look like? What would it have in it? What would you need to include?

Design a plan for this space in the same style as Thomas Mawson's plan.

